



## It is the way for *tumah* to leave

In the third *perek* (3:7) we are introduced to the concept of *derech hatumah latzet* - "it is the way of *tumah* to leave". To explain, *tumat ha'met* (*tumah* originating for a corpse) spreads making everything under the same *ohel* (covering) *tameh*. The *tumah* can spread from one *ohel* to the next one beside it, if there is a gap of at least a *tephach* by *tephach* in the partition that separates between the two. The exception to this is the case of *derech hatumah latzet*.

The case that illustrates this point is the *biv* (pipework) that is running beneath a house. Its cross-sectional area is a *tephach* by *tephach* such that it is defined as an *ohel*. Both ends of the *biv* however are less than a *tephach* such that one would not expect the *tumat hamet* to spread from one to the other. The *Mishnah* teaches that if a *kezayit* from a *met* is found in the house, then anything found in the *biv* is indeed *tahor*. If however the *tumah* is found in the *biv*, then the contents of the house is *tameh*. The reason is that in this case, since the *biv*'s end is less than a *tephach* the way *tumah* would "leave" is through the house itself. We shall try to understand this principle.

It is important to note the this concept of *derech hatumah latzet* is raised in other *mishnayot* also. The first *Mishnah* of the next *perek* discusses a case of a large cupboard found in the house. Based on this same principle, if the *tumah* is in the house, the contents of the cupboard are *tahor*, while if the *tumah* is in the cupboard, the contents of the house is *tameh*. Similarly, next week we will learn about the case (4:2) of a large chest whose drawers are a *tephach* deep but opening to the room is less than a *tephach*. Once again, if the *tumah* is in the house, the contents of the drawer are *tahor*, while if the *tumah* is in the drawer, the contents of the house is *tameh*. In that case, *R' Yossi* disagrees since the *tumah* can be removed from the drawer in pieces less than a *tephach* in size.

The *Mishnah Achrona* (4:2) questions the necessity of all these cases if they are seemingly based on the same principle. Furthermore, why is it only in the last case that *R' Yossi* argues?

The *Mishnah Achrona* explains that each case is different and necessary. In our case, the *biv* is dug in the ground under the house. The reason why the house is *tameh* in this cases, is since there is no opening at either end the size of a *tephach*, the *biv* is equivalent to a *kever satum* (a sealed grave). In that case a *kever satum* makes all adjoining *ohalot* (above, below or beside) *tameh*. The *Mishnah Achrona* (3:7) explains that this is different to *tumah* that is simple buried, where it makes *tameh* anything that is directly above it *tameh*. In other words, our case is a special case of *derech hatumah latzet* – and even *R' Yossi* would agree that the house would become *tameh*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* continues that ordinarily there are two different ways to understand *derech hatumah latzet*. The *Rama* understands that since the *tumah* will eventually be removed via the room, it is viewed as if it is already in the room. Alternatively, he cites the *Mahari MiTrani*, that it is deter one from using that area for *taharot*, out of concern that the *tumah* might be removed at the same time that the room is being used, or that the cupboard might accidentally be opened.

Based on this, the *Mishnah Achrona* explains that *R' Yossi* would only argue in the case of the drawer. According to both understandings of *derech hatumah latzet* there is no reason for concern. Firstly, since the *tumah* can be removed piecemeal, it is not a certainty that the *tumah* will eventually transit through the room. Secondly, since the opening of the drawer is less than a *tephach*, even if it was opened, the opening would not be large enough for it to spread into the room.

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### Revision Questions

אהלות בי: בי – ד': א'

- What is the *shiur* (minimum measure) of the following things for them to transfer *tumah* under an *ohel*:
  - Blood from a corpse?
  - *Dam tevusah*?
  - *Dam katan*?
  - *Ever serufin*? (בי: בי)
- Explain the debate for the last three cases. (בי: בי)
- What is the law regarding *rakav* that is mixed with water regarding *chibur*? (בי: בי)
- Which seven things transfer *tumat met* but not via an *ohel*? (בי: ג')
- When is a spine and skull considered *chaser*? (Include both opinions.) (בי: ג')
- Explain the debate regarding how a *golel* and *dofek* transfer *tumah*. (בי: ד')
- Which six things from a *met* are *tahor* if they are *chaser*? (בי: ה')
- Explain the debate regarding *rova atzamot* that came from two corpses. (בי: ו')
- What else is debated in the same manner? (בי: ו')
- Explain the debate regarding an *etzem ke'seorah* that split in two. (בי: ז')
- Explain the debate regarding *rova atzamot* that have been ground. (בי: ז')
- What cases are debated between *R' Dosa ben Harkinas* and the *Chachamim*? (בי: ח')
- In what cases do they agree? (בי: ח')
- Explain the debate regarding a ladle full of *rakav* that was scattered in a house? (בי: ט')
- What is the law regarding a *revi'it* of blood that was absorbed into the floor of a house? (בי: ט')
- When would a person that leaned over part of a *revi'it* of blood (from a *met*) be *tameh* and when would he be *tahor*? (בי: י')
- What parts of a corpse are not *tameh*? (בי: י')
- Provide three examples where parts of a *met* transfer *tumah* by virtue of a being a *chibur*. (בי: י')
- What is *dam tevusah*? (Include all opinions.) (בי: יא')
- What is the minimum size for a hole for *tumat ha'met* to "spread through"? (בי: יב')
- Does the measure change for "saving the entrances"? Explain. (בי: יב')
- What are the minimum dimensions for an "ohel"? (בי: יג')
- What two functions can an *ohel* serve (for *tumah*)? (בי: יג')
- What are the three cases involving a *biv* and what is the ruling in each of these cases? (בי: יד')
- What extra qualification does *R' Yehuda* place on the definition of an *ohel*? (בי: יד')
- Are the holes through the side of a chest considered as being part of the *ohel* formed inside the chest? (בי: טו')
- If such a chest was inside a house, how would the law differ if the *tumah* was inside or outside the chest? (בי: טו')

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### Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
27 December י"ב טבת	28 December י"ג טבת	29 December י"ד טבת	30 December ט"ו טבת	31 December ט"ז טבת	1 January י"ז טבת	2 January י"ח טבת
Ohalot 4:2-3	Ohalot 5:1-2	Ohalot 5:3-4	Ohalot 5:5-6	Ohalot 5:7-6:1	Ohalot 6:2-3	Ohalot 6:4-5

